

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

In the Specification

On page 1, add the following text between lines 1 and 2:

Field of the Invention

On page 1, add the following text after line 6:

Background of the Invention

On page 1, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 7, with the following amended paragraph:

As known, in strapping machines the strap extension, pulling and retrieval unit is of basic importance for the performance achievable. Indeed, the speed at which the various operations and the quality of the final result are performed whether in terms of correct positioning of the strap or in terms of satisfactory traction of the closed strap depend on this unit. For example it is important to maintain the tension of the strap as set before the beginning of the strapping operations apart from the nature and dimensions of the package to be strapped. In addition, any fold or bend in the strap caused during the extending or pulling operations causes a strapping defect or, worse, jamming of the machine.

On page 1, add the following text after line 19:

Summary of the Invention

On page 2, add the following text after line 15:

Brief Description of the Drawings

On page 2, add the following text after line 27:

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

On page 4, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 24, with the following amended paragraph:

As may be seen in FIG 4 (where the transmission virtually in the plane of the gears 30, 32 is shown), when the lever 24 is in non-operational position, i.e. with traction wheel spaced from the main wheel, at least the pair of gears 30, 32 is mutually disengaged so that the motion of the motor 36 is not transmitted to the main wheel 18. But when the lever 24 is in an operational position, i.e. with traction wheel thrust against the main wheel, the gear pairs 30, 32 and 33, 34 are engaged and the motion of the motor 36 is also transmitted to the main wheel 18 which thus turns synchronously with the wheel 32. Transmission of motion from the motor 36 to the

wheel 18 is such as to have relatively slow rotation of the wheel 18 but with power and at the same peripheral speed as the auxiliary wheel 21.

On page 5, please replace the paragraph beginning at line 9, with the following amended paragraph:

As may be seen by comparing FIGS 4 and 5, advantageously the gear pair 30, 32 has teeth with module (for example module 2) less than the module of the teeth of the gear pair 33, 34 (for example module 3), so that even when the lever 24 is in a non-operational position the gear pair 33, 34 remains slightly engaged to keep the axle 31 in synchronous rotation.